

as a servitude which, though neither creditable to the originality of taste, nor, if persisted in, favourable to the progress of the individual architect, is still (if regarded, as I think with respect to the entire history of the art it should be, as a stepping, not as a standing stone), one which establishes the fact of progress, and holds out the promise of ultimate freedom. There was a danger of the art getting fixed on this stone as on a pedestal, petrified, if I may so speak, for looking back; but that danger past, the most rigid copy of a correct building, in any authorized style, among our recently-erected churches, if considered comprehensively as regards our present architectural status, should be looked upon as a decided advance beyond the brickbuilt barns or architectural hybrids which bygone years erected to the honour of religion. It is at least indicative of,—1st, a return from absolute architectural nonentity to something of definite style; and 2ndly, a cause of the praiseworthy restoration of our ancient architectural gems to their primitive lustre,—many, too many of which, under the combined influence of time and of quasi-church-beautifiers, bade fair to sink into a state of architectural idiocy. Something of this matter, both as to bane and antidote, has been seen in our time in Oxford. It is not long since the visitor entered Wyndle's beautiful Gothic quadrangle of Magdalen College through a Doric gateway,—when, standing beneath the vaulted roof of his ante-chapel, he gazed up to the flat expanse of whitewashed plaster with which a quasi-classical taste had ceiled his choir, whilst the college dignitaries, seated in their classically-moulded-and-panelled stalls, heard the "pealing organ blow" from out a classic organ case, in a classic organ loft supported on fluted Corinthian columns. Whilst admitting, therefore, the impropriety of this direct conventionalism as a persistent practice, we should still, perhaps, looking at what has been, be led to view it as an omen of good promise as regards what shall be hereafter.

But, in whatever light this be considered, it is unquestionably true that we are now moving in the right direction: many buildings have sprung up around us, under the influence of a better light, which will not discredit the age we live in, nor the land either. Some lately erected in London, Liverpool, Manchester, and other towns, are, in many respects, of the genuine stamp. Perhaps the chief thing that could be urged against many of our recent provincial erections is their diminutiveness: our churches and chapels, after visiting the great buildings of London, or the mediæval and academic structures of Oxford and Cambridge, look too much like models. In reference to one or two meritorious compositions of late erection, I would say, fewer and larger parts would have been preferable: had they been one and a-half or twice the scale, they would not only have been beautiful but imposing and powerful. Size is an element of power in architecture: beautiful curves and groupings, fine proportions and rich details, will please, but not astonish and impress,—which it is within the scope of architecture to do. Too often, architects are overruled; though I am convinced that, if they were true to themselves, they might create more deference, on the part of their employers, to those great principles on the observance of which must ever repose the wellbeing of art, and the honour of its professors.

But though we are, doubtless, advancing,—to look back and detect the faults which we have been committing, and are still occasionally committing, to criticise existing buildings, and expose their shortcomings, descending, at the same time, on their merits, I consider by no means an unprofitable employment. While it is done in the right spirit and under such conditions as to avoid the possibility of giving personal offence, it is perhaps the best mode of illustration that could be adopted.

One of the greatest defects of our present practice is incompleteness; we make niches, but put no statues in them; on pediments we place the pedestals, without the figures, of the acroteria; chimneys, the most prominent objects, are without decoration. One of the chief difficulties with the designers of classic and Italian villas, and town buildings in general, has been the chimneys, which in general are suffered to deform the roof, instead of being

called into play as ornaments to vary the outline, and give lightness and elegance to the composition. Any object obtruding beyond the general line of building, upwards, should be of a light and ornamental character; such a feature seems by its very protrusion to entreat us to decorate it; but, generally speaking, no attempt is made to render it pleasing to the sight, which could as well be done in the classic or Italian styles as in the Tudor; chimneys are, therefore, generally eye-sores. On this subject my advice is, ornament the chimneys, do not attempt to hide them, even in the most decorated classic designs. They are no disgrace to the exterior, any more than the hearth and fire-place are to the interior; nor need roofs be hid or gables omitted, both may be taken advantage of in the composition. As to the chimneys, heed not their upper part growing black with smoke—that, in domestic buildings, will but give the warm and comfortable appearance which should characterize dwellings; all marks of use, time, and weather contribute to the picturesque. It is quite absurd to sneer at the association of Greek pediments or Corinthian columns with English, or rather modern chimneys; had the Greeks known the comfort of our fire-places in their houses, would they have deemed it necessary to omit the portico to make way for the chimney? All we have to do is, to give them an agreeable form and finish, make them worthy of the company they are introduced to, and produce a harmony between them and the essentially decorated portion of the edifice.

So far from chimneys being any real objection, we in fact want objects so protruding: where there are many breaks in the front, by projecting or receding parts, they are not so much called for; but in straight, unbroken façades, they are useful in giving a varied outline to their summits. One objection I have heard urged against classic buildings is, that we cannot have a picturesque sky line; but the impression has arisen from a paucity of invention shown by their designers, in neglect not only of the chimneys for this purpose, but of providing other means. Nothing for the purpose is so beautiful as statues, and this is equal to Gothic finials, or any other termination used in any style; accordingly, on the apex and at the foot of pediments, and along the summits of façades, over columns, pilasters, and piers, in buildings of great pretension, statues are introduced; but, of course, the expense precludes their extensive employment. In the same position, on buildings of less pretension, urns and vases are used,—in the design and form of which very little diversity prevails, but scarce any other crowning object seems dreamt of. Busts are less expensive than statues, and would, properly elevated, form effective terminations. But the multitude of beautiful objects of the animal and vegetable kingdom are forgotten. What gracefully formed quadrupeds, in various attitudes, might be selected for this purpose? What still more graceful objects are presented by the feathered creation; while, to many of these, as indeed to quadrupeds, associations attach that would render them assisting to our purpose of characterizing edifices, used either symbolically or otherwise. On the garden side of a country house, doves, and other peaceful birds, would be appropriate finishing ornaments. Not to speak of the creatures of "fancy's world," what beautiful objects for this purpose might be formed by grouping flowers and fruits. Graceful knots of foliage might terminate the apex of a small classic pediment, as well as of a Gothic canopy; groups of objects or articles illustrative of the purpose of the building might be also used. But, without imitating nature at all, what a rational and delightful source of ornamentation have we, for this purpose, in geometrical figures!

But the want of completeness to which I would most earnestly call attention, is manifested in the interior of our buildings, which in general exhibit decoration in no respect fulfilling the promise of the exterior. Disappointment is the uppermost feeling on entering many a building on whose exterior we have dwelt with pleasure; some are not in good taste, others are in an inferior style, while a third description presents a poverty of interior fitting, that ill accords with the expensive masonry without. The ceiling is, perhaps, the part of an

apartment that calls most loudly for decoration, and no architectural feature is more susceptible of it, where it might be introduced with more effect, or give more pleasure to the inmate; yet this feature we almost invariably neglect. We naturally look up for beauty; however lovely the earth, the sky, both night and day, presents us with greater charms; we are cheered, in our out-door hours, by its ever-changing picture, for which a flat white plane is a miserable substitute in our in-door life. To houses of the very highest class these remarks will apply, for it is a feature which has not had its due proportion of attention, in point of decoration, in any class of buildings, from the cottage to the palace. There can certainly be no more fitting place for decoration in the habitation of a being created upright: can inconsistency be more extreme than that presented by thousands of apartments, where a rich, elaborately decorated carpet is under the feet, and a plain, dead, flat ceiling above? In the interior of Arabian buildings the ornaments almost invariably become richer, more delicate and minute, as their height from the floor increases; and the most exquisite productions of the artist are lavished on the ceiling.

With respect to the form, the curve is at all times preferable to the flat, though the latter, by various means, is capable of great beauty also. No very great additional height is required in order to have a curved ceiling, as, whether coved or segmental, the rise need not be very great. For rooms of great pretension there is no form more noble and natural than the vault and dome, particularly the latter, whether hemispherical or segmental, as far as it suits the plan, or can be adapted by pendentives or otherwise. It is the best substitute for the blue vault of the sky, the starry concave of the heavens. It was a fine idea of the builders of the mosque of Saint Sophia at Constantinople, a conception in advance of ours, to make the curve of its dome so flat that it should seem to correspond with that of the sky, and be a portion of the firmament. We want an enlarged, improved, enriched, and, at the same time, inexpensive system of interior decoration, for domestic and ecclesiastical, commercial, and other buildings, in our Anglo-Classic styles. For churches, collegiate, and other buildings, in the Pointed style, we have examples in our cathedrals and other buildings which prove that the genius of interior decoration was once amongst us, as well as the taste to employ it. At Henry the Seventh and King's College Chapels,—the oratory at Beauchamp Chapel,—the Temple Church,—Wolsey's Hall, Hampton Court,—Christ Church Hall, Oxford,—Westminster Hall,—and others, we have ceilings and roofs that might vie with any that Europe could show. For assistance in evolving a system of classic decoration, we might look to some parts of the continent. Exterior decoration there, has sometimes, probably, been carried too far,—a few continental edifices exhibiting ornaments so minute and fragile as to seem at least unfit for exposure to the weather in any climate. But this could not be said of interiors. The Moorish or Morisco-Spanish architecture suggests to us what richness might be produced by very simple means: their icicle pendants, inlays, and casings, and purely geometrical and imaginative ornaments, are very effective, and with them they often produced greater results than we, with all nature to imitate, have attained to. But the art of interior decoration was better understood, and more successfully practised, in the great age of modern art in Italy, and, indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, than at present in any country. We never had any decoration to be compared with the mural and fresco paintings of the Italians, and there is probability in the supposition that their system was obtained from remains of the ancients, which time or violence has not spared to us. Beside the curved and richly-embazoned ceilings produced by the Italians, and the pictorial embellishment of their walls, ours might symbolize poverty itself. The ceilings of the principal apartments of a Roman, Genoese, Venetian, or Florentine Palace, were considered as most important features,—and on their design and execution the highest talent was employed. In ecclesiastical buildings the contrast with ours would, I fear, be still greater. Whilst the interior of the churches of Italy glow with